



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Indictment

Defendant: Shawn Gibson et al

**DETROIT RETURN PREPARER INDICTED ON PREPARING FALSE RETURNS AND
WITNESS TAMPERING CHARGES**

Shawn Gibson, 45, a return preparer, along with his accounting firm's vice-president, Tanisha Summers, 30, both of Detroit, were charged with preparing false and fraudulent tax returns, along with conspiring to defraud the Internal Revenue Service, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced. In addition to the 38 counts of preparing false tax returns, Gibson was also charged with witness tampering, along with Camelia Peatross, 63, also of Detroit, who was indicted on charges of false personation after unlawfully representing herself as an IRS agent to witnesses.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agents in Charge of IRS Criminal Investigation and Peter E. McConney, Special Agent in Charge, Chicago Field Office, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

According to the second superseding indictment, during 2004, 2005 and 2006, Gibson owned several tax preparation services including Shawn Gibson & Co., New Detroit Tax Services, and Metro Verse Tax Service. As a way of advertising their services, Gibson and Summers would pass out flyers informing potential clients of their tax preparation services. These potential clients would complete a Client Intake Sheet and received a tax analysis.

Whether the clients agreed to use their services or not, Gibson and Summers would file income tax returns on their behalf, adding false dependents, businesses deductions, losses, charitable contributions, and tax credits, in order to increase the tax refund due. The fraudulent tax refunds totaled over \$260,000. In most cases, the refunds were electronically transferred into bank accounts controlled by Gibson. A check was normally prepared and provided to the client in an amount substantially lower than that which was refunded by the IRS. Gibson and Summers also provided clients with copies of their non-filed income tax returns, which more accurately reflected their true tax refund or liability.

According to court records, in June 2006, while IRS Criminal Investigation had an ongoing investigation into Gibson's return preparation business, Gibson tried to unlawfully intimidate a witness from providing testimony, records, documents and the fraudulent refunds to the IRS. That same witness later received a voice mail message from co-defendant Peatross, who represented herself as an IRS agent with an "active warrant" for an arrest of the witness. Peatross instructed the witness to contact Gibson and try to resolve this issue to avoid prosecution.

Later in June 2006, Peatross contacted a Flagstar Bank Employee wanting to gain information on an account associated with the scheme. Peatross identified herself as an IRS agent and asked that the funds of the account be put into a cashier check and sent to her home address. Peatross represented to the bank employee that she could facilitate the return of the funds back to IRS.

United States Attorney Murphy stated that "We take tax enforcement extremely seriously in this district. Abusive tax return preparers, such as these defendants, will always be investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent by my office. This prosecution demonstrates my office's continuing efforts to enforce tax laws that were set up for the good of all and to deter those who would subvert them."

"While most return preparers provide an excellent service, a few unscrupulous tax preparers can cause an enormous amount of damage to their clients, while criminally enriching their life style", said Aouate. "Don't be used in any money making scheme, be elective in choosing your preparer."

McConney said, "TIGTA will vigilantly investigate all allegations of IRS impersonations and will work with the U.S. Attorney to prosecute all proven allegations to the fullest extent of

the law."

Preparing false and fraudulent tax returns carries a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment and a \$250,000. Conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Witness tampering carries a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. False personation carries a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

United States Attorney Murphy thanked IRS Criminal Investigation and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration for their investigation of the case. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Noceebe S. Gordon.